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George's legislation addressing problem of underage drinking goes to governor

LANSING –The Legislature has passed new laws designed to address the problem of underage drinking and sent it to the governor for signing, Sen. Tom George, R-Texas Twp, announced today.

Introduced by George, Senate Bill 637 gives judges more sentencing flexibility for minors convicted of alcohol possession and probation violation.

“The drug court professionals who testified at the Senate hearing argued that the threat of jail time is an important incentive in ensuring compliance with the drug court’s treatment orders,” George said. “Unfortunately, it is often the case that for court ordered treatment of drug or alcohol addiction to be successful there must be some consequence for noncompliant repeat offenders.”

To allow for a wider range of judicial options the law would permit circuit court judges to defer prosecution for first offenses and provides jail time as an option for subsequent probation violations. Both were praised by judges and prosecutors as necessary tools to help deal with the problem of underage drinking.

“Substance abuse among minors is a real problem,” George said. “Altering a course of substance abuse among the young can be a life-saving measure that ultimately will reduce the cost to society and relieve suffering.”

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Radio comments from Sen. Tom George on the new underage drinking laws are available on the Senate Majority Audiowire at www.senate.michigan.gov/gop.